

What is River Of Words?

River of Words is an arts and environmental education program that:

- ◆ nurtures respect for and understanding of the natural world
- ◆ promotes literacy in all its forms
- ◆ trains teachers how to integrate the arts into core curriculum subjects
- ◆ gives youth a forum for expressing their creativity and concerns
- ◆ helps children develop a sense of belonging to a particular place
- ◆ builds community partnerships
- ◆ leverages existing resources in support of education
- ◆ facilitates interdisciplinary teaching methods
- ◆ distributes, publishes, and displays children's art & poetry
- ◆ publishes and Educator's Guide and curriculum support materials

River of Words (ROW), a non-profit organization, was founded in 1995 by then-US poet Laureate Robert Haas and writer Pamela Michael. Each year, in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, we conduct an international poetry and art contest for children in grades K-12.

Each April, eight US winners, one international winner, and a "ROW Teacher of the Year" are honored (during National Poetry Month) at an Award Ceremony at The Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Seventeen states currently award state ROW prizes, as well.

River of Words publishes an annual poetry book of winning submissions, selected by Robert Haas. We also exhibit the children's paintings at museums, libraries, conferences and other venues around the world. Through our website and many workshops and presentations around the country, we provide students and teachers – and their communities – with tools, inspirations and incentive to begin exploring the natural and cultural history of their own homegrounds.

The contest is free, and every child is acknowledged with a personalized "Watershed Explorer" certificate. Children may enter on their own or through schools, nature centers, libraries, youth clubs and other organizations. Girl Scouts can earn their "Water Drop" patch by entering the contest and fulfilling other requirements (www.epa.gov/adopt/patch)

**Indiana will have its own River of Words poetry contest in 2003.
We will only be participating in the poetry portion in 2003.
All Indiana entries will be sent to the National competition.**

**Indiana River of Words Contest is in cooperation with
Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Education Committee
And
Indiana Project WET**

How do I begin ROWing?

The theme is watersheds.

- ◆ Read through the River of Words Contest (Indiana) Rules & Guidelines, which contain specifics about entering, poem length, etc. (attached)
- ◆ Contact Susan Schultz – Indiana Project WET State Coordinator if you have any questions.
317-562-0788 projectwet@dnr.state.in.us
- ◆ Contact local water or park districts, museums, conservation and arts organizations to see if they have any resources you can use on the theme watersheds: naturalists, poets, artists, videos, maps, etc. (One of the most successful and creative uses of River of Words that we've heard about was in Mill Valley, California, where an elementary school teacher took her students to a senior citizens home that was situated alongside a small urban creek. The seniors talked to the children about what the area was like when they were children and together they explored the creek. The children's subsequent poems and artwork so inspired the seniors that they invited the kids and their families to return to the center, where they read them poems they had written in response to the children's poems. This project has turned into an ongoing oral history and creative writing project and has connected the school and the senior center in ways that are lasting and profound.)
- ◆ If you are school based, try to involve other teachers in River of Words. Collaborations between science, language arts, social studies, and art teachers have been very successful in many schools and have not only produced wonderful poems and paintings, but have led to community service projects like creek clean-ups and school gardens. Aside from the obvious benefit of shared ideas and workloads that cooperation allows, a group effort seems to energize students about the project, as well.
- ◆ River of Words is designed as a vehicle for building community partnerships. It is an opportunity to involve parents, service groups, local businesses, the media and other community resources in a common goal. While such partnerships are not essential to an effective ROW project, giving students' work and concerns a wider audience can engage them more fully in the process.
- ◆ If possible, get outdoors, even if it's only the schoolyard. Utilize field activities that encourage careful observation, data recording, sketching, listening, etc. Repeated visits to the same site allow students to observe changes. Many teachers incorporate a "service learning" component in their ROW projects, like water quality monitoring, tree planting, gardening, or creek clean-up.

◆ **Mail River of Words' Poetry Entries to:**

(Indiana contest entries due by Feb 10, 2003)

Mail to:

ROW – NREC
5785 Glenn Road
Indianapolis, IN
46216-1066

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Education Committee is the Sponsor of the savings bonds for the Indiana winners in the poetry contest.

River of Words Contest Rules and Guidelines – Indiana 2003

Each year, in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words conducts a free international poetry and art contest for youth on the theme of watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of their local watersheds, and to express through poetry and art, what they discover.

For each homeground we need new maps, living maps, stories, and poems photographs and paintings, essays, and songs. We need to know where we are so that we may dwell in our place with a full heart. –

Scott Russell Sanders

Indiana entries must be postmarked by February 10, 2003

Indiana is only participating in the poetry contest in 2003

1. The contest is open to youth who are age 5-19, on the February 10 deadline date. Youth older than 19 who are still enrolled in high school are eligible, but college students, even if 19 or younger, are not. Entrants need not submit work through their school; individual submissions are also accepted (Please see **Common Question** for clarification on these categories).
2. Youth may enter the contest as many times as they like, but a separate entry form must be completed for each submission.
3. All entrants will receive a Watershed Explorer Certificate from the River of Words Nations Office.
4. All poems must be original work. Written poetry must be either typed (preferred) or legibly written in ink (pencil does not photocopy); **Poems should not exceed 32 lines in length (written)**. The student's name, school, city and state should be included on the poem, and a completed Entry Form should be attached. Please staple the Entry Form to the poem so that each piece faces out.
5. Submissions become property of River of Words, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Education Committee and Indiana Project WET. Through submission of poetry, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted.
6. All entries must be postmarked by February 10, and must be received by February 12. We are not responsible for entries that are late or lost in the mail. Entries received after the deadline will automatically entered in next year's contest.
7. Winners will be announced in April of each year.* Winners must sign an acceptance form.
8. Indiana Prizes consist of:

Category Winners	1 st place \$100 savings bond
	2 nd place \$50 savings bond

Categories: Indiana – Poetry only accepted in 2003

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| <i>I</i> - | Kindergarten through Grade 2 |
| <i>II</i> - | Grade 3 through Grade 6 |
| <i>III</i> - | Grade 7 through Grade 9 |
| <i>IV</i> - | Grade 10 through 12 |

9. Grand Prize at the National Level in each category above: round trip transportation from the winner's nearest major airport to Washington D.C. for the winner and one parent of guardian. Prize is not redeemable for cash. Accommodations and some meals will also be provided. Taxes and all other expenses are the responsibility of the winner. Winners

*River of Words (Indiana IASWCD Education committee) reserves the right to not award a Grand Prize winner in any given category if no entry merits such designation.

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts - Education Committee is the Sponsor of the savings bonds for the Indiana winners in the poetry contest

River of Words ' Contest Entry Form
(Indiana contest entries due by Feb 10, 2003)

Mail to:
ROW – NREC
5785 Glenn Road
Indianapolis, IN
46216-1066

Note: If we can't read your handwriting, you can't win a prize and you won't get your Watershed Explorer Certificate. So, please print carefully and use a pen! Must be a complete entry form to be judged – and must accompany each poetry entry.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Age: ____ Grade: ____ Male: ____ Female: ____

Title of Submission: _____

Poem: _____

School or Organization _____

School/Org Address _____ City _____

State ____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country: _____

School Phone _____

Teacher/Facilitator(s) First Name _____ (Please Print)

Last _____

Parent or Guardian's Name _____ (Please Print)

Signature _____

Home Address _____ City _____

State ____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone(_____) _____

I hereby grant and assign to River of Words (ROW) the non-exclusive right and permission, in respect of the original writing, artwork or photos that I have submitted to River of Words, to use, re-use, publish, and re-publish, and otherwise reproduce, and display the same, individually or in conjunction with other original artwork, writing, photos, and video, in any and all media now or hereafter known throughout the world, for illustration, promotion, art, advertising, and trade, or any other purpose whatsoever; and to use my child's name to identify the author of the work in connection with my participation in the River of Words Program. I understand that any use of this submitted work will include my child's name as its creator. I hereby release and discharge River of Words from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the original artwork, writing, photos, and video, including without limitations any and all claims for libel or invasion of privacy. In any of the winning categories, River of Words maintains the exclusive right to declare no winner and withhold prizes if no poem or artwork of merit is found. ROW assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged poetry or artwork. River of Words may sell, assign, license, or otherwise transfer all rights granted to it hereunder. This authorization and release shall also inure to the benefit of the successors, legal representatives, licensees, and assigns of River of Words. I have read the foregoing and fully understand the contents thereof. This release shall be binding upon me and my heirs, legal representatives, and assigns. I further release River of Words from any responsibility for injury incurred during the research or production of the original writing, artwork, photos and video.

I, _____, being the parent or guardian of the above-named minor, hereby consent to and join in the foregoing release and consent on behalf of said minor.

Pledge of Originality: I declare and avow that the poem(s) I am submitting to the River of Words Contest is my own original work.

Student's signature _____